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August 21, 1969

GSA BULLETIN FPMR B-19  
ARCHIVES AND RECORDS

TO : Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Correspondence practices

1. Purpose. This bulletin calls attention (1) to the need for typing or stamping the name of the signing official on correspondence, and (2) recent changes in airmail practices.

2. Expiration date. This bulletin contains information of a continuing nature and remains in effect until canceled.

3. Typing or stamping name of signing official on correspondence.

a. Background. The Chairman of the House Committee on Government Operations has indicated that the Committee receives Government correspondence with illegible signatures and without the signer's name typed or stamped in the signature area.

b. Procedure. All officials are requested to observe the procedure outlined in part I, chapter 1, paragraph 13 of the United States Government Correspondence Manual 1968, quoted as follows:

"13. SIGNATURE ELEMENT

"a. If you know who will sign the letter, type the name of the signer four lines below the last line of the letter and flush with the left margin. Type the signer's title on the next line, flush with the name. If more than one line is needed for the signer's title, begin succeeding lines flush with the left margin. The entire signature element should not exceed four lines. It is permissible to stamp, instead of type, the name and title below the written signature. If a stamp is used, be sure it is applied to each copy of the letter.

"b. If you cannot determine the name of the signer when you type the letter, leave this space open. After the letter is signed, type or stamp the name and title of the signer below the signature on the original and in a corresponding position on all copies.

"c. If an acting official is to sign the letter, he signs his name and the word 'for' before the typed name of the regular signing official. If it is known before typing that an acting official will sign, type his name and the word 'Acting' before his title in the signature element."

4. Use of airmail

a. Background. The Post Office Department now transports all first-class mail by air, on a space-available basis, when it will speed up delivery. The Department has requested amendment of part I, chapter 3, paragraph 3 of the United States Government Correspondence Manual as follows:

b. Amendments.

(1) Paragraph 3a. Insert final parenthetical note:

"(See Paragraph 4a(3)(c) directing use of Zip Code in address to achieve greater accuracy and speed in the dispatch and delivery of mail.)"

(2) Paragraph 3a (1). Delete the present instructions and substitute the following:

"(1) Airmail. Use airmail only when the most expeditious handling by the Post Office Department is required in dispatch and delivery. Generally, airmail is not advantageous for distances less than 250 miles. (See comment under (2) First-class mail.) For overseas mailing, airmail is used unless the correspondence is going via diplomatic pouch. An exception can be made for mail going to a Military Post Office (APO or FPO). See the procedures in (10) Military Ordinary Mail (MOM)."

(3) Paragraph 3a (2). Delete the present instructions and substitute the following:

"(2) First-class mail. Use first-class mail for correspondence not requiring the highest priority. The Post Office Department now transports by air, on a space-available basis, all first-class mail that can be advanced in delivery to the addressee. Normally, next-day delivery should be afforded within 250 miles and delivery to any major U.S. city within two days."

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